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### City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs receives NEA Big Read Grant

**Charleston, S.C.** – The City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs is one of seventy-five nonprofit organizations receiving a grant to host an NEA Big Read project between September 2017 and June 2018. The Charleston Big Read events in September and October of 2017 will focus on Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric*.

Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,400 NEA Big Read programs, providing more than \$19 million in grants to organizations nationwide. In addition, Big Read activities have reached every Congressional district in the country. Over the past eleven years, grantees have leveraged more than \$42 million in local funding to support their NEA Big Read programs. More than 4.8 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event, approximately 79,000 volunteers have participated at the local level, and 37,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible. An initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book.

“Through the NEA Big Read we are bringing contemporary works to communities across the country, helping us better understand the diverse voices and perspectives that come with it,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “These 75 organizations have developed unique plans to celebrate these works, including numerous opportunities for exploration and conversation.”

Established in 1977, the **City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA)** is committed to promoting and fostering excellence through artistic expression, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all of Charleston's citizens regardless of social, economic, or physical considerations. The OCA strives to provide access to the arts for all citizens and plays an important role in producing and/or supporting programs that educate, inform, and inspire through a wide variety of cultural activities that celebrate creativity and diversity, contribute to the area's economic development, and underscore Charleston's reputation as an international cultural destination. For more information about the projects and programs of the OCA, visit [charlestonarts.org](http://charlestonarts.org).

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